The 2016 UC Personal Statement essay questions were updated and released as of October 4, 2015 from the UC Office of the President. Below you will find the essay questions, steps to take before writing, and what to consider as you begin and complete your personal statements.

**Rough Draft of UC Personal Statement Prompt #1 Due \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Final Draft Due\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

**Rough Draft of UC Personal Statement Prompt #2 Due \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Final Draft Due\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

**Prompt #1 (freshman applicants)**

Describe the world you come from — for example, your family, community or school — and tell us how your world has shaped your dreams and aspirations.

**Prompt #2 (all applicants)**

Tell us about a personal quality, talent, accomplishment, contribution or experience that is important to you. What about this quality or accomplishment makes you proud and how does it relate to the person you are?

**5 IMPORTANT STEPS TO CONSIDER IN WRITING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT**

1. **Follow Directions**- Never before has following directions been so critical. The personal statement essay questions (or prompts) will ask you for specific information. You will want to answer every piece of the questions, not leaving one item out.
2. **Word Count**- Responses to your two prompts must be a maximum of 1,000 words total.
3. **Content Distribution**- Allocate the word count as you wish. If you choose to respond to one prompt at greater length, we suggest your shorter answer be no less than 250 words.
4. **Overall Length**- Stay within the word limit as closely as you can. A little over — 1,012 words, for example — is fine.
5. **Original and Unique**- The personal statement that you submit should be about you and personal. This is not a time to be embarrassed or shy about what you have experienced or have accomplished. This is the platform to describe your hopes, ambitions, and life experiences. Applicants should complete the essay as if they were telling a story. Their own story about their life and college experience. Students should be expressive and honest.

There are some simple strategies to ensure a successful personal statement. In addition to the steps mentioned above, you will want to consider the following:

**Start Now!** – You want to make sure your personal statement is completely error free. For that, you must start early and have others read it as well. This gives you an opportunity to correct any grammatical or structural problems, and to get feedback. You want to be sure it all makes sense to someone who doesn’t know you and that it flows together nicely.

**Use Microsoft Word** – If possible, use a program like Word to help you catch some of those silly spelling errors and to have it saved on your computer or flash drive. Students that struggle are those that attempt to write their personal statements a week before the deadline (November 31st) straight into the UC application system itself. Those students can’t see misspellings, will most likely have grammatical errors, and will not be able to show their draft to an English teacher for advice.

**Notepad** – Once you are happy with your responses to the essay questions, save a copy in Microsoft Word and another copy as plain text. Plain text is used by programs such as Notepad on Windows and Text Edit on Mac. You want this version in plain text because that is how the UC application wants it. You will cut and paste from this plain text document into the application itself. After you have pasted the information in the actual UC application space provided, make sure you review it one last time to catch any strange characters or line breaks that might have appeared from the copy and paste. You want to make it as easy to read for the admissions reviewers as possible.

**Reflect On Your Application** – You want to make sure your personal statement accurately reflects the information you have on your application. For example, if you had a 1.5 GPA in your sophomore year because of a family crisis or other extenuating circumstance, explain that issue in your personal statement. Another example of something worth explaining would be your struggles in a particular subject, or an extended period of absence from school.

**Your Own Words!** – Step 5 (front side) calls for a personal statement that is original and unique. You should never use portions of someone else’s personal statement nor copy anything from the internet. Not only will this not get you in on your experience, but it is illegal! Feel free to use people for suggestions and advice, but everything written should be unique with your own ideas and words.

**Expect To Revise** – You are going to bring in one carefully composed draft of your personal statement to a class workshop next week. Based on feedback received in that workshop, you will turn in a revised draft to your English teacher next Friday. Your teacher will grade and return this draft to you for final revisions and resubmission. It is not uncommon for students to revisit and revise this essay a FOURTH time in their senior year before submitting it to the University of California admissions office.